

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 IO-10 SCCT-01 OPR-02 OC-05

CCO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 SAM-01 SAB-01 OMB-01 EB-07

DOTE-00 FAA-00 A-01 SY-05 /111 W

----- 073711

O R 271140Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4507

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY BONN

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6698

STUTTGART FOR ELG

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, LE, PLO

SUBJECT: SITUATION REPORT, LEBANON, AS OF NOON, MAY 27

REF: BEIRUT 6678 AND 6684 (NOTAL)

1. BEIRUT RESIDENTS AWOKE TO EERIE QUIET MORNING MAY 27, FOLLOWING NIGHT IN WHICH SCATTERED OUTBREAKS OF SMALL ARMS FIRE, SOME OF IT FAIRLY HEAVY, WERE HEARD IN VARIOUS PARTS OF CITY. (LEVEL OF SHOOTING WAS NOT RPT NOT NEARLY AS INTENSE AS PREVIOUS NIGHT'S FUSILLADES REPORTED OUR 6678.) ROAD-BLOCKS AND ARMED MEN ARE STILL IN EVIDENCE IN MANY QUARTERS, BUT WE HAVE RELIABLE REPORTS THAT STREET BARRICADES IN SOME AREAS (NOT RPT NOT THOSE HELD BY PHALANGISTS OR FEDAYEEN) ARE BEING PROGRESSIVELY REMOVED. NATION-WIDE GENERAL STRIKE PROCLAIMED MAY 24 BY LEFTIST GROUPS HAS BEEN SUSPENDED, AND SMALL NUMBERS OF LOCAL CITIZENRY HAVE BEGUN TO EMERGE FROM THEIR HOMES. LEBANESE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES HAVE MANAGED IN PAST 24 HOURS TO ARREST NUMBER OF SNIPERS (INCLUDING LEBANESE COMMUNISTS AND PPS ADHERENTS) WHO HAD BEEN OBSERVED FIRING INDISCRIMINATELY AT OTHER COMBATANTS AND INNOCENT PASSERS-BY. POLICE REPORT THAT SEVERAL (BUT NOT ALL) PREVIOUSLY BLOCKED MAIN ROADS LEADING OUT OF BEIRUT TO MOUNTAINOUS HINTERLAND HAVE NOW BEEN CLEARED, AND SMALL AMOUNT OF TRAFFIC IS MOVING ON STREETS IN SAFER PARTS OF TOWN. AIRPORT IS STILL OPERATING NORMALLY, AND AIRPORT ROAD IS STILL OPEN.

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2. WE ESTIMATE ADDITIONAL CASUALTY TOLL IN PAST 24 HOURS TO HAVE BEEN 13 KILLED AND SEVERAL DOZEN INJURED, BRINGING OVERALL FIGURE FOR DEATHS INCURRED SINCE MAY 20 TO APPROXIMATELY 100, AND GOR INJURED TO AROUND 300. YESTERDAY'S FATALITIES INCLUDED IRANIAN RADIO-TV JOURNALIST POUR NAIMI, WHO WAS HIT IN HEAD BY BULLET WHILE TRAVELLING FROM AIRPORT AFTERNOON MAY 26, SHORTLY AFTER HE HAD ARRIVED IN BEIRUT FROM TEHRAN. AT BEST WE CAN DETERMINE, ALL AMERICANS ARE STILL SAFE, ALTHOUGH THEY--ALONG WITH REST OF LOCAL POPULATION--REMAIN EXTREMELY WARY AS RESULT OF TRAUMATIC CONDITIONS WHICH PREVAILED HERE OVER PAST WEEKEND. EMBASSY IS ADVISING AMERICAN COMMUNITY TO EXERCISE EXTREME CAUTION IN THEIR DAYLIGHT MOVEMENTS TODAY AND

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TO AVOID VENTURING
FROM THEIR HOMES TONIGHT. SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED AGAIN TODAY.

3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRES FRANGIE'S DECISION RE FORMATION OF NEW CIVILIAN CABINET TO SUCCEED THAT OF RESIGNED PRIMIN RIFAI IS NOT EXPECTED UNTIL THIS EVENING, AT EARLIEST. SUNNI POLITICAL

LEADER RASHID KARAME IS STILL ODDS-ON FAVORITE TO FORM NEXT CABINET, BUT NO ANNOUNCEMENT WILL BE MADE UNTIL CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN FRANGIE AND WIDE RANGE OF LEBANON'S "TRADITIONAL" POLITICIANS-- EXPECTED TO LAST THROUGHOUT DAY AND EVENING OF MAY 27 --ARE COMPLETED. SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM RETURNED TO DAMASCUS THIS MORNING, A FURTHER INDICATION THAT CABINET CRISIS IS HEADED FOR RESOLUTION IN FASHION SATISFACTORY TO SARG. AT SAME TIME, LOCAL OPPONENTS OF OUTGOING MILITARY GOVT ARE ALERT TO POSSIBILITY THAT FHANGIE MIGHT TRY TO PROLONG DELAY IN FORMATION OF NEW CABINET, A DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD OUTRAGE THEM AND PROBABLY LEAD TO RENEIED CIVIL DISORDER AND STRIFE.

4. COMMENT: INFORMED LOCAL TIPSTERS EXPECT THAT PRESIDENT WILL GIVE KARAME GO-AHEAD TO FORM NEW CABINET SOMETIME TONIGHT, OR AT VERY LATEST TOMORROW MORNING, AND THAT IT WILL BE MADE UP PRIMARILY OF NON-PARLIAMENTARIAN FIGURES AND EXCLUDE BOTH PHALANGIST AND LEFTIS (I.E., JUMBLATTIST) REPRESENTATIVES. SUCH DEVELOPMENT WOULD PROBABLY SERVE FURTHER TO CALM OVER-HEATED ATMOSPHERE AND IMPROVE LOCAL SECURITY CONDITIONS FOR TIME BEING.
GODLEY

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